



**Major Findings from the  
Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)  
CCSSE 2008 Compared with CCSSE 2005**

*From the Office of College Effectiveness Assessment*

The CCSSE is a nationally-normed survey of students' engagement with their coursework. In 2008, 585 community colleges participated in the CCSSE. In the Spring of 2008, over 1000 Mercer students completed the detailed student survey instrument. The students were in Mercer course sections randomly selected by the CCSSE consortium for effective representation of the college population. This ensures comparability of Mercer's data to all other colleges in the survey pool. The CCSSE group is based at the University of Texas at Austin ([www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org)).

Below are some key findings and benchmarks comparing the 2008 administration of the CCSSE with the 2005 results. These outcomes will be integral to Strategic Planning, the assessment of institutional effectiveness, college-wide efforts in recruitment, retention, advisement, General Education, and the assessment of student learning outcomes. It is impossible in this short summary to present the rich details the CCSSE has generated about Mercer's students. If you have questions about any of the findings, or would like to learn more about other topics covered, please contact Institutional Research & Assessment at [mcccira@mccc.edu](mailto:mcccira@mccc.edu) or contact Dr. Gianna Durso-Finley at (609) 586-4800 x3301.

**Summary of Student Engagement Findings:**

Overall, Mercer is doing very well compared with CCSSE peer schools and New Jersey peer institutions on key benchmarks of student engagement. In addition, while not statistically significant, Mercer has made notable improvements on the engagement benchmarks vis-à-vis 2005.

<b>Benchmark*</b>	<b>Mercer County Community College 2008</b>	<b>Mercer County Community College 2005</b>	<b>New Jersey Consortium 2008</b>
<i>Student Effort</i>	52.5	48.8	50.4
<i>Active and Collaborative Learning</i>	50.4	49.6	51.1
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	53.6	49.8	51.4
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	52.3	51.0	50.7
<i>Support for Learners</i>	51.4	52.0	49.8

\*CCSSE Benchmark scores are computed by averaging the scores on survey items that comprise that benchmark. Means used in the sample are weighted by full and part-time status and are standardized so that the weighted mean across all students is 50, with a standard deviation of 25.

Given that there is no area that immediately stands out as being in need of remediation, Strategic Planning should focus on areas for which Mercer would prefer to be a “high-achieving” college. Below are some further findings comparing 2008 with 2005.. Improvements are emphasized with larger, bolded text. Changes that may warrant further investigation are underlined.

**General Statistics:**

2008	2005	Measure
72%	72%	Started at MCCC
<u>39%</u>	46%	of students report that their father had no degree beyond high school
<u>43%</u>	48%	of students report that their mother had no degree beyond high school

Note that Mercer is seeing a decrease in the number of students who are likely to be first generation college students.

**Mercer’s Students on how hard they worked:**

2008	2005	Measure
<b>69%</b>	64%	of students responding said they “Often” or “Very often” asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion
<b>13%</b>	16%	said they “Often” or “Very often” came to class without completing the readings or assignments
<b>55%</b>	46%	said they “Often” or “Very often” worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations

**On what they did in class:**

2008	2005	Measure
64%	63%	of students said their courses “Quite a bit” or “Very much” emphasized memorization
<b>63%*</b>	49%	of students said their courses “Quite a bit” or “Very much” emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations. *The 2008 finding is statistically significant
<b>55%</b>	49%	of students said that Mercer “Very much” or “Quite a bit” encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
71%	70%	of students said that Mercer “Very much” or “Quite a bit” encouraged the use of computers in academic work

**And out of class:**

2008	2005	Measure
73%	75%	of students read four or fewer books over the course of the year for personal or academic enrichment that were not assigned
<u>51%</u>	57%	worked 20 or more hours per week
70%	69%	of students said that Mercer “Very much” or “Quite a bit” provided the support they needed to help them succeed at this college
<u>17%</u>	14%	are taking classes at another college simultaneously with Mercer

**With respect to the College Mission:**

2008	2005	Measure
69%	68%	of students said that Mercer “Very much” or “Quite a bit” helped them in acquiring a broad general education
49%	48%	of students said that Mercer “Very much” or “Quite a bit” helped them in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills

**What gets in the way of reaching their goals at Mercer?**

2008	2005	Measure
41%	38%	report it “Likely” or “Very likely” that work would make them leave a class or the college
31%	31%	report that the care of dependents would be a key issue
<b>55%</b>	48%	said that transfer to a 4-year college or university would be the main reason they’d leave Mercer

**Paying for college:**

2008	2005	Measure
41%	41%	said their own funds were the primary source of their tuition payments
38%	35%	said grants or loans were key sources of their tuition payments

**Overall Experience:**

2008	2005	Measure
84%	84%	rated their overall experience at Mercer as Good or Excellent
93%	93%	would recommend Mercer to a friend or family member